

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4118

INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL MUNICH

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2532

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, HU

SUBJ: VISIT OF HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO INDIA

REF: BUDAPEST 0168

1. SO FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE HUNGARIAN FOREIGN
MINISTER PUJA'S VISIT TO INDIA

FEBRUARY 5-8 PRODUCED

LITTLE SUBSTANCE. PUJA WAS QUOTED SAYING HE HAD A
"USEFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE" THIRTY-MINUTE TALK WITH THE
PRIME MINISTER AS WELL AS SEVERAL "VERY FRIENDLY"
DISCUSSIONS ON INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL ISSUES WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN, BUT THERE WAS NO COMMUNIQUE AND
FEW COMMENTS WERE VOLUNTEERED BY HIS HOSTS. PUJA TOLD
THE PRESS AFTER HIS SECOND MEETING WITH CHAVAN THAT
INDIAN AND HUNGARIAN POLICIES ON MOST ISSUES "ARE
IDENTICAL OR SIMILAR". THE ONLY NOTABLE ANNOUNCEMENT
DURING THE VISIT WAS THAT THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENT IS
EXPECTED HERE LATER IN 1976. AN INDIAN MEA OFFICIAL
SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD US THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT WILL TAKE
PLACE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR.

2. NEITHER WE NOR OTHER WESTERN DIPLOMATS HAVE BEEN
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ABLE TO OBTAIN A GOOD READING OF PUJA'S CONVERSATIONS

HERE. THE HUNGARIAN EMBASSY DECLINED TO DISCUSS THE VISIT WITH US (THE DCM DIRECTED OUR INQUIRIES TO HIS FIRST SECRETARY, WHO DESCRIBED HIMSELF VARIOUSLY AS TOO BUSY OR -- MOST RECENTLY -- AS IN MOURNING BECAUSE A RELATIVE DIED IN BUDAPEST), AND THE MEA HUNGARIAN DESK OFFICER HAS NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY HELPFUL. THERE WERE EVIDENTLY SOME DISCUSSIONS UNDER THE GENERAL RUBRIC "EXTENDING DETENTE TO ASIA." THE STATESMAN (NEW DELHI) DESCRIBED THIS AS ONE OF THE "DOMINANT SENTIMENTS" EXPRESSED BY PUJA AND WE NOTE CHAVAN MENTIONED IT IN HIS DINNER TOAST. OUR MEA SOURCE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE SOVIET PROPOSAL FOR A COLLECTIVE SECURITY SYSTEM IN ASIA HAD BEEN RAISED BY PUJA BUT WAS NOT GIVEN "UNDUE ACCENT". ASKED TO CHARACTERIZE THE OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT, THE MEA OFFICIAL SEEMED SATISFIED WITH THE OBSERVATION IT WAS THE FIRST VISIT EVER TO INDIA BY A HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTER.

3. PUJA REPORTEDLY CUT SHORT SIGHTSEEING IN BOMBAY FEBRUARY 7 IN ORDER TO RETURN SOMEWHAT EARLIER TO BUDAPEST (FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN NOTED IN HIS TOAST, WITH PERHAPS A TRACE OF IMPATIENCE, THAT "DUE TO YOUR PREOCCUPATIONS THE SHORT VISIT WHICH YOU HAVE PLANNED HAS BECOME EVEN SHORTER"). BEFORE WINDING UP IN DELHI FOREIGN MINISTER PUJA FORMALLY INVITED CHAVAN TO VISIT BUDAPEST WHEN CONVENIENT.

4. COMMENT--PUJA'S VISIT, UNLIKE RECENT VISITS BY OTHER EAST EUROPEAN NOTABLES, PRODUCED HARDLY A RIPPLE IN DIPLOMATIC OR OFFICIAL CIRCLES IN DELHI. WE ASSUME PUJA HAD GOOD REASONS FOR MAKING THE STOP BUT WE DOUBT THEY RELATE DIRECTLY TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF INDO-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS. WE BELIEVE THE INDIAN DIPLOMAT IN BUDAPEST WHO "ATTEMPTED TO PLAY DOWN THE SIGNIFICANCE" OF THE VISIT PROBABLY KNEW WHAT HE WAS SAYING (REFTEL). THE INDIANS AND HUNGARIANS WERE EXPECTED TO ACCOMPLISH SUBSTANTIALLY MORE BUSINESS WHEN THE INDO-HUNGARIAN JOINT COMMISSION MEETS IN BUDAPEST IN APRIL. A HUNGARIAN DELEGATION IS ALSO EXPECTED SOON IN DELHI TO GIVE FINAL SHAPE TO A CULTURAL EXCHANGE AGREEMENT.
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